

THE COIGN OF VANTAGE



W. T. HERRIDGE



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The Coign of Vantage

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The Coign of Vantage

By

W. T. HERRIDGE

Author of "The Orbit of Life"



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Preface

THE writer of these essays gratefully acknowledges the kind reception given to a previous series, *The Orbit of Life*. In this book, as in the former one, he has treated different aspects of human affairs in the belief that the ethical and spiritual underlie them all, and afford the only adequate clue to their meaning. He claims no merit for standing in what he thus regards as "the coign of vantage," but will be glad if there is enough truth in his vision to be of some little service to others who, like him, not merely watch the world-drama, but have to take their place in it.

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On Keeping Abreast of the Times

“ By despising all that has preceded us, we teach others to despise ourselves. Where there is no established scale nor rooted faith in excellence, all superiority—our own as well as others—soon comes to the ground. By applying the wrong end of the magnifying glass to all objects indiscriminately, the most respectable dwindle into insignificance, and the best are confounded with the worst. . . . If, with the diffusion of knowledge, we do not gain an enlargement and elevation of views, where is the benefit? ”

—HAZLITT: *On Reading New Books.*

On Keeping Abreast of the Times

NOW that Science has done so much to annihilate space, and bring us immediate news from almost every quarter of the globe, a kind of reproach attaches to the parochial point of view. The daily newspaper, whatever its faults, ought to be a sufficient corrective of that. And yet, the growth of a true cosmopolitan sentiment is not determined either by the extent of our knowledge or the facilities we possess for obtaining it. In our lazy gratitude over the triumphs of modern invention, we must not allow ourselves to admit that we are nothing but slaves of an intricate network of machinery. An eloquent passage in Cicero's *De Legibus* describes a citizen of the whole world as one who, taking a noble view of

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things, is freed from the snare of a narrow outlook not so much by variety of information as by that profound insight which separates what is mortal and transient from what is divine and eternal.

It will not be the fault of sensational journalism if, in some directions at least, we are not soon made "superficially omniscient." But of what particular benefit is it to note, as we sip our coffee, that some foul murder has been done, or that a minutely-detailed scandal has ruffled the calm of high social circles? The art of culture partly lies in learning how to forget. Even the paragrapher should be more than a mere pathologist. The large-minded witness will neither be too dainty to face facts as they are, nor too blind to discern their full significance. But he will not revel in the unhealthy, nor set down aught in malice. Perfectly aware that all kinds of deeds are being done around him, he will prefer to speak of life's heroism rather

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than its cowardice, its glory rather than its shame. For while it is unquestionably of some consequence what a man knows, it is of still greater consequence what kind of a man knows it.

Any one who attempts to paint a satisfying picture of the present should not leave out a proper background. To-day is simply the sum total of yesterdays, plus itself. No single hour stands in complete isolation from other hours, but takes its bias from those that have preceded it. The most ardent radicalism is thus compelled to have some conservative elements in it. What history calls Revolution comes from ignoring the suggestive lessons which experience is intended to teach us. It is the drastic cure for insolent evils too long tolerated without rebuke. The normal process of development is by evolution. The clock of time is not meant to strike twelve until all the other numbers have been rung out in regular sequence.

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If we would be modern in the best sense, we must be at once behind the age and yet ahead of it, looking with undistorted vision upon what is of permanent value both in retrospect and prospect in order to the proper shaping of human destiny.

The popular conception of what is meant by modernness shows itself in a very plain way in regard to literature. Perhaps the successive enthusiasms which each new book excites in some quarters, though often of a shallow sort, may seem better than none at all. It requires courage to confess total ignorance of a recent novel that is being talked about in the clubs and at fashionable dinner-parties. Only a man of strict probity will go through the ordeal without excuse or equivocation. It is not that he has made the morose resolve to avoid the volume simply because every one else appears to like it, but that other reading has consumed his leisure. If he is of

sensible habits, he may have learned to abandon casual methods, and formed some definite plan. At the dawn of the new star he was, perhaps, refreshing his memory of the ancient classics, or examining some historical period, or probing into the secrets of science, or trying to reach the heart of a great poem, or studying with more exact and reverent attention the words of Him of Nazareth. And in that case, his lack of eager desire to hear some new thing, even though he may carry it to an obstinate extreme, cannot at least be attributed to intellectual indifference. Herr Teufelsdröckh made a laborious attempt to read the Canonical Books of the Dandiacal Body ; but "In vain," he says, "I summoned my whole energies and did my very utmost ; at the end of some short space I was uniformly seized with not so much what I can call a drumming in my ears, as a kind of insufferable Jew's-harping and scannel-piping" there ; to which the

frightfullest species of Magnetic Sleep soon supervened. And if I strove to shake this away, and absolutely would not yield, came a hitherto unfelt sensation, as of *Delirium Tremens*, and a melting into total deliquium : till at last, by order of the doctor, dreading ruin to my whole intellectual and bodily faculties, and a general breaking up of the constitution, I reluctantly but determinedly forebore." Such alarming consequences as those which visited the unfortunate German professor, it is to be hoped, are quite unusual ; but, at all events, they serve as a tragic illustration of the fact that what is called by some "light literature" may be to others heavy indeed. Unless the food is predigested, and is really food, omnivorous people, no matter how tough they are, must have a hard time. Even though they succeed in bolting the favourite author of to-day, and so appease the furies of conventionality, they will soon be behind again if they fail

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to do the same thing with the favourite of to-morrow. For a certain kind of literature is “current” with a vengeance, and runs away faster than the sands in the hour-glass of life.

Charles Lamb congratulated himself on having a most catholic taste in matters of reading, but felt obliged nevertheless to draw up a catalogue of books that are no books, among which he includes “all those volumes which no gentleman’s library should be without.” Taken seriously, this seems a rather prejudiced assertion of the right of private judgment. One might dispense with Court Calendars and Almanacs and such like, and not miss much; but Josephus and Hume and Gibbon, whom Lamb’s whimsical palate also refuses, have been accorded a place among useful writers by a general consent which can scarcely be ignored. There are also many books dealing with matters of immediate interest which will either be read promptly

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or not at all; and others of pure amusement or fascinating narrative that beguile a weary hour. It would be too severe a rule to pass by every book that cannot become a possession forever. "The crowds and centuries of books," says Emerson, "are only commentary and elucidation, echoes and weakeners of the few great voices of time." Even so, if any one prefers his reading diluted, he should be allowed perfect freedom to complete the process of mental assimilation in his own way. The immortals take such giant strides that few have the vigour to be always keeping step with them. Many a pleasing echo, with an individuality of its own, would be silenced by the perpetual thunder of the Olympians. Publishers, as well as "the public," can afford to take a genial view of a writer who, though he does not make his home on the topmost heights, has something to the purpose to say from a quiet nook in a lower altitude. The

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name of even these is not Legion. And yet, the essence of a world-library could be brought within the compass of a modest room. What are the hundred best books is not a matter to determine by vicarious selection ; but to any one who uses his brains, a single really great book is more educational than a whole cart-load of small ones. And sound literature, like sound wine, is all the better for keeping. Though we have moved into a different atmosphere, there need be no outcry for an "up-to-date" Homer or Dante or Shakespeare. Their truth has made them eternally fresh, and the flight of time serves rather to enhance appreciation of them. So far from growing out of the great thoughts of great thinkers, it is only by earnest brooding over the problems of life and the lessons of experience that we slowly learn to grow into them.

Nothing can atone for the want of that habit of personal reflection which takes the

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grains of truth from every field and grinds them in its own mill, so translating knowledge into character. He who reads in a merely parasitic way soon loses the strength of individuality, and though he may be a walking encyclopædia, the capricious *Zeitgeist* does with him what she will. It is in the realm of action that the test comes. While new light will without doubt be given to each new age that is on the watch for it, and so lead the course of events into broader channels than those of earlier generations, yet the true man, faithful to the tasks imposed upon him, doing his duty as he conceives it to be, even though he may seem to lack the wisdom which they ought to possess who are the heirs of all the centuries, is worth being studied by every one who aspires to meet the modern situation. For he has made the same attempt which *fin de siècle* thought must also make, if it is to be of any practical service, namely, to go beneath

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surface appearances, and get at the heart of reality. The "very latest thing" should be judged on its merits, since mere newness affords no criterion of intrinsic value. But however learned one may be, he need not disdain to judge it, whether it pleases him or not. Pedants can never be efficient guides. The men who will prove most useful in this busy age are not those who look askance upon it, and sigh either for "the good old times" or for a vague Utopia that floats in cloudland before them, but those who feel a genuine interest in what is going on in the world now, and are able to read the phenomena of the present in the light of truths that are eternal. It is impossible to seize the fleeting day, save in a spirit of selfish and unproductive Epicureanism, unless we discern both its perils and its opportunities. And in order to do this, we must feel the tremendous force of those underlying laws that govern all noble living, and be swayed by an in-

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tense passion to fulfil them. The surest way to keep abreast of the times and to take our place in the ranks of real progress is not simply to count the pulse of this “live, throbbing age”—though that must be done, and with judicious and sympathetic hand too—but to keep sensitive as well to those efforts and longings of humanity which bear no date upon them, because under varied forms of more or less imperfect expression, they mark the rhythmic beat of the great heart of the world.

The Profit of Failure

"All who have meant good work with their whole hearts,
have done good work, although they may die before they
have time to sign it."—R. L. STEVENSON : *Aes Triplex*.

"Then, welcome each rebuff
That turns earth's smoothness rough,
Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand but go !
Be our joys three-parts pain !
Strive, and hold cheap the strain ;
Learn, nor account the pang ; dare, never grudge the throe !

"For thence,—a paradox
Which comforts while it mocks,—
Shall life succeed in that it seems to fail :
What I aspire to be,
And was not, comforts me :
A brute I might have been, but would not sink i' the scale."

—BROWNING : *Rabbi Ben Ezra*.

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In one of Landor's *Imaginary Conversations*, Newton says to Barrow, "I am not quite satisfied." To which Barrow answers, "Those who are quite satisfied sit still and do nothing ; those who are not quite satisfied are the sole benefactors of the world."

Everything, however, depends upon the quality of discontent and the direction it takes. If one aspires to strengthen the wavering lines of human progress, his grumbling must be of a noble kind. There are many who look at life piecemeal, exaggerating its apparent evils, and ignoring the good that underlies it. They do not see that life is concerned primarily with the building up of character rather than the assortment of conditions ; and so,

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while often intensely dissatisfied with surroundings, they are by no means dissatisfied with themselves. Their conceit breeds pessimism, and earth seems too tiresome an arena for the hearty display of their fastidious energies. Its spell is broken, its tasks devoid of interest, its music out of tune.

Thoughtful and earnest minds, on the contrary, instead of being bored by the pettiness of life, are captivated and at the same time appalled by its grandeur. The domain is so rich and vast that none can be said to have gleaned in all its fields, nor even set foot in them. Few of us are as much alive as we might be, nor do we always make the best of what life we have already. Partial attainment runs through everything, and the most sanguine and intrepid do not quite escape the vexation of monotonous experiences that bring despondent hours when it seems futile to hope that the "patchy and scrappy" bits

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of effort shall ever be wrought into a whole of perfect loveliness.

These facts are troublesome, no doubt; but we must pay for being made on broader lines than the rest of creation. Even an agony of failure is preferable to that calm indifference from which all lofty aim is gone. Composure would be purchased too dear at the price of the soul's debasement. If denied a happiness that dares to have searching eyes, it still remains for mankind to keep a nobility of sorrow. Anodynes are often dangerous. "The highest calling and election," George Eliot wrote, "is to do without opium, and to live through all our pain with conscious, clear-eyed endurance." Such words have a pathetic melancholy about them, but at the same time they breathe a protest against the annihilation of sensitiveness in any kind of false Nirvana.

Of course, that which ought never to have been must needs leave its baneful

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mark upon us. Sober thought in every age has felt compelled to recognize the ruinous consequences of wrong-doing, and has set them forth sometimes with terrible distinctness. The pages of the Hebrew seers are burdened with messages of retribution. A tragic gloom settles over the masterpieces of the Greek drama. Some schools of modern literature seem to have an almost morbid relish for discovering again the grim irony of sin, and tracing the footprints of inexorable Nemesis. And in view of the attempts made in certain quarters to obscure the antagonism between good and evil, or, perhaps, to deny its existence, can any voice be unheeded, even though it takes a lower tone than the ancient prophets, if it affords some reminder of the essential sanity of righteousness?

But something more remains to be said in order to bring the whole truth before us. As a man looks back upon his career, and

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feels that it might have been, and ought to have been so different, if he is now awaked to a genuine regret and an honest desire to amend his ways, an infinitely benevolent Power stands behind the new resolve, and gives another chance for the most despairing heart to rejoice once more. Any survey of the realm of law is deficient which ignores the tireless working of the great law of love. It is not inevitable that the darkness should remain unbroken when there is a real longing for the light. Ibsen preaches as unmistakably as Paul that "the wages of sin is death," but the earlier Realist adds that "the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Failure unlocks the door of wider revelation. It makes us humble, and that in no mere whining way. Until we feel that we have not yet attained, why should we trouble to be any more in the future than we are now? Moral enthusiasm languishes in an atmosphere of vain self-suf-

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ficiency, and becomes discredited as the mark of a crude and undisciplined nature. If strenuousness cannot find a worthy field of exercise, what is the good of having it? The very sense of imperfection proves that we are not altogether blind to the wondrous possibilities yet ahead of us, and thus spurs to further effort. And as we press on towards the heights where the eternal sunshine plays, our sympathies must broaden towards those around us, committed as they are to the same kind of struggle, and compassed with difficulties and inspirations not unlike our own. Nor will a mere formal religious creed, however orthodox, any longer suffice us. We shall be obliged to go down to the very roots of truth, separating the accidental from the permanent; and the ultimate alternative will be either practical Atheism, or enduring faith in a wise and patient Father who would fain have us draw all the while a little nearer those ideals which now, per-

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haps, tantalize with their seeming inaccessibility.

More is learned oftentimes from what we have not than from what we have, and we are saved from drifting into commonplace, not by the satisfaction of things already attained, but by the challenge of the unattained, and, it may be, the unattainable. For surely that must always challenge us.

“The peak is high, and the stars are high,
And the thought of a man is higher.”

As the student pursues his tasks, he desires more and more to enter fresh paths, and pluck strange buds of promise. To cross the threshold of the art-world and catch a glimpse of its transcendent beauty incites a longing which no wealth of colour on any canvas will wholly put to rest. To lift up eager eyes towards the unseen and eternal, and to be stirred in the depths of the soul by the wooing of its splendour, is to begin a search that will not be ended

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until love has found the Holy Grail. The prick of aspirations such as these is an evidence of human greatness ; and though some suffering may be involved, it would be sadder far if we sank into the sluggish ease of

“ Finished and finite clods, untroubled by a spark.”

And, therefore, character is to be judged, not alone by what we have mastered, but by that towards which we are striving. Human nature is too large to be confined within the orbit of a superficial practicality which, after all, is not really practical. For the “practical” man is the man who does ; and how can any one act with the greatest reach and sweep if his conduct is governed by transient caprice and not by majestic principles that make him forever unsatisfied in his attempt to illustrate them ? The road trodden by the mincing step of smug conventionality may seem smooth and pleasant ; but it is unblessed by those

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supernal voices that call to endless advance
and thus give proof of our kinship with the
living God.

While pæans to the conquerors are
plentiful enough, it is not so often that we
hear an *Io Victis!*

“ The hymn of the low and the humble, the weary,
 the broken in heart,
Who strove and who failed, acting bravely a silent
 and desperate part ;
Whose youth bore no flower in its branches,
 whose hopes burned in ashes away,
From whose hand slipped the prize they had
 grasped at, who stood at the dying of day
With the work of their life all around them, un-
 pitied, unheeded, alone,
With death swooping down on their failure, and
 all but their faith overthrown.”

Can any one imagine that these will never
have an opportunity to retrieve their for-
tunes in the divinest way? Behind seem-
ing defeat in a high purpose there often lies
hidden a real triumph which will emerge at
last so that all can see it. The main fault

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in the popular worship of success is that the standard is pitched too low. A certain kind of success can be reached without crossing any Rubicon. But it means more to self-development to essay difficult tasks than to complete easy ones. The Titans were only one remove from the immortals. A large nature runs risks that a meagre nature escapes. Every widening of the circle of life makes life itself more hazardous. As thought grows stronger, as feeling matures, as the many-sided play of earth's forces gets a firmer hold upon us, some measure of sublime failure becomes more and more possible.

The word *Finis* is not yet written in the book of human history. Our horizon cannot be bounded by the senses, nor our deepest instincts viewed as mere provincialisms of this planet destined to vanish when riper knowledge dawns upon us. Though we carry nothing else out of the world, we carry out ourselves. There is

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continuity in the thread of existence, and no suddenness about sequels. Life is intended to be a long *crescendo*, marked not only by gain in calmer and wiser thought, in the ability to solve more complex problems and to discharge more arduous tasks, but also by those growing desires that stimulate to spiritual ascension. It will take time to perfect man. Will it not take eternity?

“And what is our failure here but a triumph's
evidence
For the fulness of the days?”

The various seasons of existence are given us that we may reap some fruit in all of them; but the most abundant harvest is still in store, and only the ardent soul, stung by its partial attainment, will be able to put to the highest use the gifts of the limitless future, and to deploy at large in that pure realm from which earth's handicaps are gone.

Criticism

"We are firm believers in the maxim that, for all right judgment of any man or thing, it is useful, nay essential, to see his good qualities before pronouncing on his bad."

—CARLYLE: *Essay on Goethe.*

"If you would be loved as a companion, avoid unnecessary criticism upon those with whom you live. The number of people who have taken out judges' patents for themselves is very large in any society."

—SIR ARTHUR HELPS: *Friends in Council.*

Criticism

WHEN one is said to be in a critical mood, it often means nothing more than that he is finding fault with something or somebody. But criticism and censure are not by any means synonymous. Matthew Arnold defines literary criticism as "a disinterested endeavour to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world." In carrying out such an aim, it may be necessary to show what is not the best, and, perhaps, to make a direct attack upon the palpably base and worthless. This is not to be done, however, for the mere pleasure of doing it, but with the practical purpose of separating the chaff from the wheat in such an unmistakable way that even a casual observer shall have little trouble in detecting the vast difference between them.

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A similar method may be followed with safety in the criticism of human life. He whose chief concern is to examine the defects of others and hold them up to ridicule cannot fairly be called a critic. Instead of endeavouring to learn and propagate the best, his main anxiety seems to be to bring the worst under a fierce light. The passion for scenting out falsehoods does not always carry with it a passion for the enthronement of truth. What the world needs most is not an army of those who, like dogs of mongrel breed, snap and growl and prey on garbage, but men of pure and tender soul, discerning the pathos as well as the shame of evil, and therefore consumed with a strong desire to put their arms around every fallen brother and lift him back to God.

The critic, too, must look on all sides of the matter. For the "critic" means the judge, and the judge is not a partisan. He runs neither to the extreme of malicious

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heat nor of frigid listlessness. His object is to weigh every item of evidence whether favourable or otherwise, and to draw unbiased conclusions from all the facts before him. The number of judges in the moral realm is extremely small ; the special pleaders can be found almost anywhere, alert for occupation. No one need wish to court the judge's grave responsibility. We are seldom able to form an exhaustive estimate of other people. Even with the best intentions we may greatly overrate or underrate them, simply for want of sufficient knowledge. But, at all events, it is the judicial temper that we should seek to cultivate. The verdict of prejudice or personal animosity, though it often does a good deal of harm, is ruled out by every thoughtful mind as of no value at all.

There never was any one in the world, no matter how lofty in virtue, who has not been spoken of by some in a tone of sneering depreciation. Even Christ did not es-

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cape the slanderous tongues around Him. Were we content to accept the gossip of the Scribes and Pharisees, we should have to picture a man little better than a drunkard or a *roué*. And if this happened to the Perfect One, what might happen to us who have plenty of faults which zealous sport, if it will, may turn into a hunting-ground? There is in most people a curious mixture of good and bad, of grandeur and meanness. The worst have their redeeming features, and the best some strange inconsistencies and perplexing contradictions. Very few moral portraits are so handsome in every detail that they will bear even the mildly exaggerated touch of the caricaturist, much less the utter disfigurement of deliberate misrepresentation. It would be a doubtful benefit to see ourselves as others see us if there was not at least a measure of accuracy in their vision.

Human nature can never be judged by its weakest qualities, even when we are

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quite sure that the weakness which stirs our disdain really exists, and is not a phantom of the imagination. A farmer would not report his average crop correctly if he gave the slender yield from one poor acre. Nor would a merchant make a just estimate of his annual percentage of gain if he picked out those periods when trade was dullest. If we have a few rainy days in spring, only a confirmed croaker would describe the whole season as dark and cheerless. There is a side of almost every one that resembles the barren field, or the unsuccessful week, or the storm-swept sky. But we shall not discover the man himself by picking him to pieces, and spreading out the least attractive bits for minute analysis. That kind of vivisection is simple barbarity, and reveals no scientific secrets. If we want to know our fellows, we must appreciate the best to which they have attained, and behind that, we must have some glimpse

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into the undeveloped best of which they may yet be capable. While the ebb-tide lays bare a ragged margin, unsightly, perhaps, in its tangled disarray, it is the high-water mark that tells the real strength of the sounding sea.

It is inevitable, of course, that we should form opinions. Some power of criticism belongs to every one; and since it cannot be thrown away without losing part of ourselves, the obvious duty is to employ it with jealous care. Man keeps his preëminence over the rest of living creatures largely because of his superior faculty of judgment. If he proceeds with unreflecting step along the road of life, not taking any pains to separate what seems to be from what is, he can never do his share of the world's work as it was intended that he should do it. One of the gifts of a well-trained mind lies in a nice discrimination that does not call for the constant use of superlatives, nor alternate between hysterical enthusiasm

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and wild blows with a sledge-hammer. Shallow estimates are usually wanting in light and shade. Both praise and blame come too easily. And though this kind of comment may be voluble in its confidence, one feels in a measure degraded if he stops to listen to it. Earnest thought sometimes hesitates to express itself. But when it speaks, it speaks to the purpose, and its words have weight. Every one who has learned to distinguish between good and bad art or literature or life, and is not afraid to give utterance to his views, becomes an educational force that raises the whole standard of things. And though there is plenty of room for the further growth of a sane public sentiment even in the most "advanced" communities, we should be still barbarous if it were wanting altogether. Until the critical faculty is so developed among a people that it creates a demand for what is excellent in every sphere of thought and action, the State may be rich

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and increased with goods, but it can never rise to true national greatness.

And as a preliminary step to judging our fellows, we had better learn to judge ourselves. If we are bound to find fault, is there any sufficient reason why we should always go abroad to begin it? How different the world if men were as severe upon their own errors as upon those of others! It would scarcely be known that some people had a conscience but for their indignant outcry against the shortcomings of their neighbours. They talk about "this wicked world" as though they dwelt in some far-off, blameless planet, and were of different material from the ordinary run of mortals.

“They gutsy, donnered ither folk,
Their weird they weel may dree;
But why present a pig in a poke
To a gentleman like me?”

“It is matter of great difficulty,” says Coleridge in his *Aids to Reflection* “and

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requires no ordinary skill and address, to fix the attention of men on the world within them, to induce them to study the processes and superintend the works which they are themselves carrying on in their own minds ; in short, to awaken in them both the faculty of thought and the inclination to exercise it. For, alas ! the largest portion of mankind are nowhere greater strangers than at home." But this strangeness must wear off if we wish to have a just understanding of others or to be of service to them. He who has not yet cast out the beam from his own eye is much handicapped in attempting a delicate piece of work upon his brother's eye ; and the difficulty will not be diminished if he is unaware of any beam at all. When one has felt the strength of the forces that war against the true welfare of life ; when he has reviewed his own bitter defeats as well as his hard-won victories ; when the honest desire of the spirit has been flung back

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upon him by the weakness of the flesh, such a man finds something else to do than denounce his comrades, and push them farther down than they are already. Discerning how foolish is every evil way, he would fain see wisdom triumphant everywhere. But since he has learned to know himself, he goes about his crusade with a pitiful heart. He makes due allowance for individual circumstances and temperament. If he is not sure, he gives the benefit of the doubt ; and his main concern is not to demolish reputation, but to build up character. He may not be liked by the groundlings, who would prefer to be left alone. But even they must feel that his praise is like a healthy, stimulating breeze, and his blame a righteous retribution.

If everything that is called criticism had this high temper and aim, it would bless both him that gives and him that takes it. But the truth has to be confessed that if

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some garrulous censors ever were the salt of the earth, in the process of wholesale abuse, they have, for the most part, lost their savour. Even that commendable impulse, a "sense of duty," sometimes bears the burden of many peculiar actions. It may be that under his anonymous covering "your well-wisher," "your faithful friend," "one who prays for you," conceals an honest desire to benefit. But it is to be feared that he seldom accomplishes it. For in the majority of cases, he irritates more than the man who speaks right out. The habit of stone-throwing is open to objection even when you don't know whether those who indulge in it live in glass houses themselves. It hurts the poor fellow who is hit with one of them quite as much as if he could hit back.

There is a still lower deep into which it is not pleasant to look, and which, let us hope, is sparsely inhabited. Those whose poisonous tongues dart forth their deadly

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venom may injure others beyond repair ; but they show at the same time that their own soul has gone to herd among the swine, and that the memory of earth's unspotted ones, some of whom they may have known, has vanished from their mud-stained consciousness. To find an almost fiendish delight in the faults of others, and to make a specialty of adding to them ; to couple the lowest motives with the highest course of conduct ; to transfer a vile reading of things to minds that are incapable of even imagining such an interpretation—this can never contribute to the social or moral welfare of any place less foul than hell. Those who sink to such infamy are worse than the bold robber who takes his chances with you in the open road, because they lurk like cowards behind the hedge, and stab you in the dark.

Amid earth's imperfect judgments, the supremely important thing is to look with honest gaze into the mirror of truth, and

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try to discern what we are really like in the sight of God. Oliver Wendell Holmes in *The Poet at the Breakfast Table*, says, "I should like to see any man's biography with corrections and emendations by his ghost." But, perhaps, it would be more startling still, if it were an autobiography, to read the foot-notes and appendices which a conscientious ghost felt compelled to insert in the unexpurgated edition. Frank and fearless self-criticism is the soul's house-cleaning which drives out unholy traffickers who might otherwise find free lodgings there for an indefinite period. And while it will not prevent the criticism of others, nor, at times, it may be, their harsh and ignorant condemnation, it disarms it all of its bitter sting. To be able to go through the world undismayed by evil report, protected against the shafts of ridicule or enmity—that is something, and it is the reward of the pure in heart. If any one speaks ill of us, the worst suffering

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comes when we know that it is substantially true. If it is not, then slander is like the angry-surge which beats against the granite rock in vain.

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“This is the curse of life! that not
A nobler, calmer train
Of wiser thoughts and feelings blot
Our passions from our brain;

“But each day brings its petty dust
Our soon-choked souls to fill,
And we forget because we must
And not because we will.”

—MATTHEW ARNOLD : *Absence.*

“But there will come another era when it shall be light,
and man will awaken from his lofty dreams, and find—his
dreams still there, and that nothing is gone but his sleep.”

—RICHTER : *Hesperus.*

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WITHOUT a background that stretches away into the illimitable distance, the picture of life, no matter how gaudily coloured, is poor and shallow. The springs of all sincere and heroic action lie hidden in the hills of splendid dream. Not what the eye sees, but what the heart feels, determines the rank of character. The psalms chanted in the soul's sanctuary waft their echoes over the whole plain of practical experience, and the big world outside looks to the little world inside to interpret and glorify it.

Under no circumstances, therefore, can the intrusion of ideals be regarded as an impertinence. The young child is all the better for wandering at times into fairy-land, building "castles in the air," and

peopling the prosaic earth with the creatures of his bright imagination. Though the zealous student may seem to some only a foolish enthusiast, throwing his chances of pleasure away, yet if, amid all his toil and discouragement, the rich rewards of knowledge are kept in view, he is more than satisfied with the hope of some day gaining them. The lover brings an unreserved devotion to the feet of his mistress, and puts all he values most into her keeping. Cynics may tell him that such constancy is wasted, and that the answer to his faith will be determined by motives of self-interest. But this is not his idea of womanhood, still less of the one woman he would call his own. If the reformer, confronted with stolid indifference, or, perhaps, with brutal hostility, thought of personal ease, he would let things go as they are. But he is haunted by the presence of a mysterious loveliness, and cannot rest until he has done his utmost to

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have a temple built to it on life's highway, and thronged with reverent worshippers.

These cherished inspirations in a large measure determine what names shall appear on the roll of the immortals. Galileo, "vehemently suspected of heresy," and condemned to imprisonment at the pleasure of his judges, still held to the truth which his labours had revealed, and so opened the door to a wider acquaintance with Nature's laws. Exiled from Florence, and disinherited by his fellow countrymen, Dante would never have written the *Divina Commedia* but for the stirrings of unselfish patriotism and of pure love for the gentle Beatrice. Savonarola thundered forth his warning messages, and at last dared the fires of martyrdom, because his vehement nature always kept before it the image of a regenerated Church in which every unwholesome fettering of conscience should be destroyed. Baffled in his fondest hopes,

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“ Though fall'n on evil days
On evil days though fall'n and evil tongues,
In darkness and with dangers compassed round
And solitude,”

John Milton would not abandon the ideal Republic of his soul, but bequeathed to future generations the richest inheritance of Puritanism in his great epic. The passion to put into ordered form the music that was surging through his brain kept Beethoven constant to his tasks though some people thought him mad. Looking back upon accumulated misfortunes he says, “ Such things as these brought me to the verge of desperation, and well-nigh caused me to put an end to my existence. Art! Art alone deterred me. I could not quit the world until I had brought forth all that I felt it was my vocation to produce.”

This power of spiritual vision marks man out from every other creature, and the quality and range of it are the key-stones of his greatness. As long as some

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high goal beckons "above the howling senses' ebb and flow," almost anything is possible. Mere intellect alone will not suffice for the accomplishment of arduous tasks unless supported by a resolute purpose that fills the whole house of life. However much the kings of men differ in the type of their special aims or the way they seek to reach them, they are enabled because of secret hopes to maintain the struggle against opposing forces, and to show a reserve of strength that will not be dismayed. The joy towards which they aspire is no immediate or tangible gratification. It is harboured in the soul in spite of appearances that seem to render its advent impossible, and its sublime idealism throws over the hard road of duty a flood of fadeless light.

"We are near awakening," says Novalis, "when we dream that we dream;" and we are fully awake when all that is best in our dreams remains with us. Every one

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dreams good dreams now and then, at least. But with some the dreams are allowed to

“ Die away,
And fade into the light of common day,”

while with others they are gradually inwrought into the tissue of experience. It is seldom that any career turns out just as was anticipated. No foresight can possibly provide against all the things that may be encountered between the starting-point and the goal. But the certainties of life far outweigh its uncertainties. Though we have no assured information with regard to every coming event, we may know that, whatever happens, the same eternal principles govern both yesterdays and to-morrows, that right is never changed into wrong, nor good into evil. The pathetic chasm which so often yawns between dream and reality is not the fault of accident, but of personal failure to illus-

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trate the deepest convictions of the soul. We ourselves have much to do with determining what our future shall be. That pillar erected by Absalom in the flush of youthful pride might have turned out a fitting monument. It was his own perfidious ambition that spoiled the prospect, and exchanged the splendid cenotaph for a grave of shame. No doubt the actual self is prone to lag behind the ideal self. But if the finished picture in the inner room of consciousness is not reproduced, in strong outline at least, upon the wall of life, we shall feel some day a keen regret that we ever looked upon its reproachful beauty. Vision becomes embarrassing and at times tragic if we persist in being disobedient to it.

For spiritual gifts have to be reckoned with. A purely materialistic philosophy is now, for the most part, discredited as a satisfactory explanation of all that is in man. A good deal of the sorrow of

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this age does not arise from lack of faith, but from weakness of moral purpose. It is like the sorrow of Hamlet, vexed on the one hand by an enlarged sense of duty, and on the other hand by the faltering power to face and fulfil it. That way madness lies. We need not dread our scepticisms half as much as our unexecuted convictions. If we would be happy, the alternative is either to believe less or to practice more. No doubt there are varying degrees of spiritual insight; but the great difference between men is caused mainly by the manner in which they deal with their own present resources. Some are so easily influenced by baser motives that even while the after-glow of noble thoughts still shoots up above the horizon, they are doing ignoble deeds. The very same wish may lead to opposite results, according as it is only a wish lazily nursed in some lotus-eating land, or is packed up by the tireless activity of an

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heroic soul. "Between the condition of many decent members of society and that for which God made them," says George Macdonald in his *Seaboard Parish*, "there is a gulf fixed quite as vast as between a serpent and a bird." And sometimes, it might be added, the bird has the serpent coiled around it, so that it flutters in a vain effort to soar aloft, and at last falls to the ground in mortal pain.

If the question were asked why a few pure aims, at least, have kept their hold upon us, the answer must often be that some one has brought out the best in our nature, and enabled us to discern its supreme significance. Those who break loose from the bondage of inconsiderate custom or selfish expediency, and come under the sway of a heaven-born enthusiasm, are the true pioneers of progress, and have a compelling power about them.

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"Surely whoever speaks to me in the right voice,
him or her I shall follow,
As the water follows the moon, silently, with fluid
steps anywhere around the globe."

It is hard to be quite false to the belief of these good angels in our possibilities. While their influence must needs be greatest when closely personal, and kindled in the flame of passionate love, yet, no matter where they are now, or how remote our relationships with them at any time, we share with others a precious gift of God that sweetens the whole vital atmosphere, and sheds some gleams of light upon the path of unborn generations.

For life is not concerned with visible things alone, but with the high hopes and yearnings of the soul. No doubt, from some points of view, this is a matter-of-fact world. Its stern realities confront us all, and tend at times to make us stern like them. But though only an unnatural Stoicism would boast of being wholly unaf-

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fected by immediate surroundings, it is a poor existence that depends on them alone. Our true nourishment is to be sought elsewhere than in the market-place. The persistence with which, despite ill-treatment,

“In man's self arise
August anticipations, symbols, types
Of a dim splendour ever on before,”

seems to prove that he may, if he will, move a little nearer the heights towards which they lead his too reluctant feet. To think otherwise would be to turn our inspirations into a grim irony. The truth is that no one can adequately interpret the meaning or learn the full uses of the things around him unless he is conscious of some One, in His heaven, of course, but in His earth also, flooding it with a divine radiance. If the glory of the unseen and eternal were taken away from life, its drama would soon become so listless that we might well pray for some kind hand to

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drop the curtain at once and forever. He who sweeps the widest circle of attainment always has his vision and his dream, and though the voice of the scorner may be heard in mocking protest, the ultimate triumph of those who have dared to be true to the noblest ideals is the great surprise of universal history.

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“ Nor ever narrowness or spite,
Or villain fancy fleeting by,
Drew in the expression of an eye,
Where God and Nature met in light ;

“ And thus he bore without abuse
The grand old name of gentleman,
Defamed by every charlatan,
And soil’d with all ignoble use.”

—TENNYSON : *In Memoriam.*

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WHEN we begin to sicken of a word not in itself repulsive, it seems time to consider why it has been brought into odium, and, if possible, to restore its right significance. The gentleman should not be consigned to the lumber-room of discarded vanities until we have had a fair look at him.

In so far as such things can be dealt with by mathematics, it rather understates the case to say that conduct is three-fourths of life. Conduct is at least an index of the temper underlying the whole of life. Brutus reproached Cassius with his indifference, and the latter bids him not to be grieved,

“ Nor construe any further my neglect
Than that poor Brutus with himself at war
Forgets the shows of love to other men.”

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A good deal is told about any one by observing the way he acts in presence of his fellows ; and as a rule, it indicates a depressed tone of moral health not to have some aptitude for genial human intercourse. That wonderful movement of the first Christian century which, in so many instances, transfigured the rough and boorish villager who is literally a “ pagan,” into a “ polite” man, a citizen, accomplished this startling change by means of nothing less than an inner reformation. All sincere courtesy is deep-rooted. Unlike those merchants who display their best goods in the shop-window, its chief treasures are brought out for those who have most need of them.

Dickens, in *Little Dorrit*, has given us the portrait of Mr. Casby, the bold expanse of whose patriarchal countenance was so valuable to himself and so disappointing to everybody else. He seemed brimful of benevolence if one could only lay hold of it. But he was “a mere inn-

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sign-post without any inn—an invitation to rest and be thankful, when there was no place to put up at, and nothing to be thankful for ; " so that Pancks the gypsy, in spite of his wiry hair and black chin, proved a much better friend to the poor tenants down in Bleeding Heart Yard. One may say, " Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled " in such an unctuous tone that for the moment it sounds like a benediction. But words will not light any fire, nor turn an imaginary loaf into a real one. The gentleman does not pose, nor indulge in vain rhetoric, but hastens to seek the most appropriate way of showing his gentleness. Exteriors afford no absolutely sure criterion in the matter. A pleasing appearance may be only the mask that hides a cruel and selfish heart, and the moment it is thrown off, the hypocrite stands revealed in all his grim deformity. A photograph of the Good Samaritan might have looked much less

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promising than that of the Priest or Levite.

And yet, unless life is to be one long illusion, some correspondence will surely be found between manners and character. It is not excess of virtue, but its defect, that produces surliness. The gentle spirit must at last shine through the thickest covering, and be taught instinctively by a chivalrous aim how best to go about its accomplishment. And method counts for a good deal. Your "plain, blunt man," is all very well when he refuses to call things by names which do not describe them; but if he rather prides himself on being rude, he becomes a nuisance, and has poor reason to assume airs of superiority. The number of those who can be dragooned into wholesome ways of living is so small that we may neglect it for practical purposes. The true gentleman is never unfeeling. It is his last resort to wear a frown, or lift his voice in maledic-

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tion. He takes pains not to offend needlessly ; and though this may be a trying world, he does not forget that he is part of it. He is calm, temperate, modest, more the pleader than the judge ; and when he has to judge, it is with that heavenly sorrow which " strikes where it doth love."

This does not mean that gentleness is to be classed among the moral invertebrates. It has plenty of backbone, and a clear insight into the pith of human necessities. While prepared to aid any measures for outward improvement, and to take into account those gradually-evolving processes of civilization which tend to eliminate certain grosser forms of vice, it still believes that the great panacea for the world's troubles is to be found in the ennobling and purifying of the hearts of men. And therefore, though intensely practical, it does not blunder about aimlessly, nor put the emphasis in the wrong place. Many of the ancient philosophers exhibit an un-

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dertone of disdain in speaking of a quality which seemed to them to have none of the wisdom of the serpent, and a superfluous amount of the harmlessness of the dove. But the really benign spirit, so far from being easily imposed upon, or made neglectful of ethical differences, survives in spite of the rage a pure nature will always feel against what is vile, and finds in its just grief and anger an added stimulus to continue its work patiently to the end.

Goldsmith's Village Preacher must have possessed an enviable disposition when

“E'en his failings lean'd to virtue's side.”

It is not impossible to swing to the opposite extreme, so that even virtues lean to failings' side. The best gifts that a man can have, if they are not to become stale, necessitate assiduous care in their preservation and mode of exercise. What is called gentleness may lose its subtle

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flavour and be dissipated in a feeble affability which is positively harmful. Some are so concerned to keep up a reputation for unruffled good humour that they would pat on the back a clever thief who had escaped the law, and maintain the fiction of friendship with mean and sordid persons whom in their heart they despised.

Until one learns to discriminate between half-hysterical sentimentalism and the genuine compassion that can afford to be angry at the right time, he has not yet caught the spirit of the ideal gentleman, but is simply, as Carlyle puts it, "the meagre Pattern Figure that, in these days, meets you in all thoroughfares." It is a curious circumstance that, while there is often no encouragement for those who, against heavy odds, it may be, are trudging along the road of duty, the picturesque transgressor excites in some quarters a morbid interest that is fertile in apologies, and perhaps loads him with hideous

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favours. One might be led to suppose that crime is admirable when done in an artistic way, and that an impatient tolerance is the most that could be looked for by the unenterprising people who keep out of it. But bad deeds are only increased by illustrative advertisement; and restless natures that live to be talked about at any cost are glad enough to find even this way open, though all others may be closed, for gratifying their love of notoriety. The disease of egotism is apt to be attended with dangerous after-effects that require the unpalatable medicine of public reprobation. The gentleman cannot be expected to have an indiscriminate taste for everything. It is true that he does not share the disdain of the dainty exquisite in presence of the scenes of common life. He is a sworn foe to that false exclusiveness whose interests, instead of being broadly human, are shut up within certain sets and coteries. Yet, at the same time,

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he has pronounced likes and dislikes, and dreads most of all that vulgarity of soul which degrades the manners because it first degrades the man.

When one is spoken of as "a Christian and a gentleman," if language means anything, it ought to be viewed as a compliment. But why use the two words? Christianity has failed to perfect its mission until it drives all the boorishness out of us. Prof. T. H. Green in one of his lectures said, "As it was the aspiration of Moses that all the Lord's people should be prophets, so with all seriousness and reverence we may hope and pray for a condition of English society in which all honest citizens will recognize themselves and be recognized by each other as gentlemen." The social mistake of being content with a thin veneer of refinement is akin to the ecclesiastical mistake of relying on doctrine and ritual, and laying little or no stress upon character. The gentleman

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must be clean and sweet within. Whether rich or poor, learned or illiterate, born in the purple or among the artisans, he has a patent of nobility in his sincere spirit, his pure ambitions, and the wealth of his service to others. For serviceableness is the distinguishing feature of the true gentleman. His delight is in ministration, and he has so disciplined his own nature, and studied other natures with such sympathetic insight that he knows how to minister in the most effective way. He adopts the princely motto, *Ich Dien*, and lives up to it.

Most unfortunately the title of "servant" has come to be regarded in certain quarters almost as an affront, and eager search is made for supposed euphemisms to substitute for it. This is one of the signs of "independence" run mad. If we are not servants of some kind, we owe the world an apology for continuing to live in it. No defense can be offered for idlers whether

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they go about in fustian or broadcloth, the scum of "the submerged tenth," or the foolish moths that singe their wings in the candle of "society." It would be grotesque for any one to base his claim to be written gentleman upon the fact that he had nothing particular to do. The working-classes are the only ones it is safe to harbour amongst us, for they alone have that fine training which rounds out manhood, and brings its full force to bear upon the multitudinous needs of the human race. The quality of work, no matter how humble, and the spirit in which it is undertaken, count for far more than the money or ease or fame or any wage of this sort it may chance to bring. It is the vocation of the gentleman, in every sphere of life, to make this evident, so that deliverance may be found from foolish envy and vulgar avarice. Then, in spite of wide differences between various kinds of work and the gifts they necessitate, a free-masonry

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will exist among all the craft, each appreciating and helping the others. And this new form of Trades' Union will do much to connect the material with the spiritual side of things, and to solve many of those problems of political economy which now vex and sometimes affright us.

And though this is a democratic age, the real aristocrats can never be superfluous. Marked out from coarser natures by their patience and courage and self-sacrifice, they are destined to prove a mighty force in illustrating the Divine idea of life, and making others so to feel its majesty and beauty that this unfinished world is brought all the time a little nearer to completion. For they are

“ Not like the men of the crowd
Who all around me to-day
Bluster or cringe, and make life
Hideous and arid and vile ;
But souls tempered with fire,
Fervent, heroic, and good,
Helpers and friends of mankind.”

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“ We bring no ghastly holocaust,
We pile no graven stone ;
He serves Thee best who loveth most
His brothers and Thy own.

“ Thy litanies, sweet offices
Of love and gratitude ;
Thy sacramental liturgies,
The joy of doing good.”

—WHITTIER : *Our Master.*

“ If I can stop one heart from breaking,
I shall not live in vain ;
If I can ease one life the aching,
Or cool one pain,
Or help one fainting robin
Unto his nest again,
I shall not live in vain.”

—EMILY DICKINSON : *Not in Vain.*

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IT is sometimes assumed that, in order to sympathize with another, one must have passed through the same experience. If this were so, the range of effective service would be kept within very narrow and formal limits, and all who were unable to make a comparison of notes would be shut out. Happily, however, the law of exclusion does not work in that way. In many cases, adversity develops such a morbid self-consciousness that what seemed an oppressively dark cloud when we were under it, begins to look quite trifling now that it happens to be a little farther off. No doubt, when the heart is really stirred by the spectacle of another's need, experience will come to its aid and accentuate its pity. But, should such an

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alternative be presented, a kindly imagination suffused with some measure of true feeling is better than the precise knowledge that scarcely feels at all.

The essence of sympathy, then, by no means lies in sameness of sensations, still less in a duet of groans. It is the voluntary advance of one soul that is free to overtake another soul that is fettered, and then to keep pace with its slow step down the avenues of trial, just as though that were the only path available. If it be said that such a quixotic partnership in gratuitous bondage is absurd, the fact remains that it has been deliberately chosen by the noblest men and women all over the world.

For example, though a teacher may have excellent judgment and wide scholarship, if he would succeed he must be teacher and pupil as well, suiting his methods to the pupil's imperfect comprehension, entering into all the difficulties of his immature

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brain, and trying to interpret the things that most help or hinder him. If the man were not really greater than the boy, he could not do this. But it is in doing this that he best shows his greatness, and rises above the mere pedagogue to become the kind of teacher who inspires youth and moulds its character. Arnold of Rugby, in one of his school addresses, said, "I cannot remain here if all is to be carried on by constraint and force. If I am to be here as a jailor, I will resign my office at once"; and again, to one of his masters, speaking of a boy who had been detected in some fault, "If he should turn out ill, I think it would break my heart."

Look at a mother who tenderly nurses her sick child. What a beautiful illustration is this of the working of love's perpetual miracle! Unquestionably she feels *for* the child. But a casual observer might do that. She does far more. She feels *with* the child, and even *in* the child. Love so

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unites the two that every pang of the little sufferer is duplicated in the mother's breast. Earth would be a poor dwelling-place if this mystery of vicarious sorrow disappeared from it. The great leaders who have meant most to mankind, never lose a fellow-feeling even for the unpromising ones who lag in the rear; and the secret of their power of guidance and benediction is to be found not so much in their cleverness as in their wealth of sympathy. The best kind of service to others demands a kaleidoscopic nature which, while it keeps the strength of a consistent purpose, presents the aspect that is most helpful, and becomes all things to all men if by all means it may save some.

The poor, of many sorts, are always with us, the ignorant and inefficient who, if no aid comes to them, are sure to be beaten in the conflict of life. Instead of regarding their presence as a providential

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arrangement with which it would be almost impious to intermeddle, sympathy finds here an obvious outlet for its exercise. No doubt, suffering is often the direct result of imprudent or vicious habits. But that fact renders all the more necessary the cultivation of a fraternal spirit which seeks not merely to investigate the causes of discontent and wretchedness, but makes some honest effort to remove them. The fittest to survive are those who show a wise and loving care for the unfittest. And though communistic theories must break down in their attempt to equalize human conditions until they have achieved the impossible task of equalizing men, yet the door of opportunity should be shut to no one to bring out the best that is in him. It is a hopeful sign that the social conscience is being aroused more and more to discern that the horrible differences of fortune which obtrude themselves in some of our great cities are not only a menace to

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a civilization that is called Christian, but also a reproach and shame.

And yet it must not be supposed that sympathy is nothing more than a medicine for the sick or a prop for the feeble. Is there any reason why those who are absorbed in some heroic task whose difficulties they meet with cheerful resolution ; those who are wrestling in the darkness with an angel that has not yet blessed them ; those who throw the passion of their whole nature into unselfish service for others ; those whose ideals goad them into fine eccentricities which, though a puzzle to the vulgar gaze are, after all, the main inspirations of human progress—is there any reason why they should be left to stand alone ? We can scarcely help hearing the plaint of the weak ; but shall we misinterpret the silence of the strong ? Even though it be given to few to scale the topmost heights, those who stand upon lower levels, catching something of the

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enthusiasm of undaunted souls, may at least cheer them in their hard endeavour. One could imagine that if the pale ghosts of some of the great departed came back to earth, they would feel a pleasant warmth in the posthumous praise of later ages, and wish that the praise had come when they were in the thick of their work, and had taken the form of practical aid.

Very often, the best way to serve the world's smaller people is not to forget its bigger ones. It was a startling cry that came from the garden of Gethsemane, "What, could ye not watch with Me one hour?" Possibly Nature may have had some soothing influence on the Master's grief.

"The olives they were not blind to Him,
The little gray leaves were kind to Him,
The thorn-tree had a mind to Him
When into the woods He came."

But what He needed most just then was the human touch. He was always saving

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others ; but the unfamiliar thought which comes from the Garden is that others may assist in saving Him. Strong men sometimes give the impression that they are indifferent to sympathy because they do not parade their needs. But the steadfast and fearless spirit is far more sensitive to the finest inspirations than the vacillating and cowardly one, and will appreciate to the full all genuine comradeship. When the helpers are helped as well as the helpless, not only does that break the solitude to which they are almost inevitably exposed by their splendid toil, but—what will be even more welcome to their hearts—it enables others, in some measure at least, to share the noble ardour that leads them on.

There is no stereotyped method of being altruistic. But we should take a good deal more interest in our fellows if we acquired the habit of looking at things from their standpoint as well as our own, and studying their nature with the keen eye of

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real friendliness. Each human soul deserves a special examination ; and sympathy is nothing if not personal. Though prepared to break down artificial barriers of pride and prejudice anywhere, and to sing even in the most unlikely places its anthem of good-will, yet, instead of being satisfied with expansive theories of "universal brotherhood" which may be held in a loose kind of way without any sacrifice, it seeks for concrete illustration on the first opportunity that comes to it.

We must concentrate if we wish to be useful. It sounds very well to talk about "evangelizing the masses." But the pious phrase has little practical value until the masses are broken up into the single units that compose them. The most effective work can rarely be done by wholesale. If men were like a row of houses, they might be dealt with in a statistical manner, and according to some prescribed formula. But they are all shapes and sizes of archi-

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ecture from the rude log-cabin to the stately palace ; and account must be made of the idiosyncrasies and circumstances of each if one aspires to be broadly philanthropic.

When we learn to take care of the units, the multiples will not need to take care of themselves. He who was the pioneer explorer into the significance and worth of the individual was also, for that very reason, the world's greatest and sanest Socialist. He drew so near to each person with whom He was brought into contact that He became, as it were, their other and nobler self, bearing their burdens as though they were His own, rebuking the evil of their nature, and bringing to the light whatever good thoughts and desires were half concealed within them. It may seem a slow way, but it is the only way. We prepare for wider tasks by throwing into the duty just before us the fervour of a God-intoxicated life. That mercantile

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view of our fellows which values them simply in proportion as they can be made to minister to our own interests, will never show what they are or what they might be. On the other hand, if we tried to supply the needs of the whole race, effort would be paralyzed in the seemingly hopeless number of them. It is only from personal centres and through the vitalities of direct personal influence that the kingdom of heaven is gradually established amongst us. By means of a sympathetic understanding of the single soul, a suggestive glimpse is given into the Festival of All Souls, and the great secret revealed that the human touch may have in it something that is Divine.

Concerning Heresy

"Those who represent Christ as presenting to men an abstruse theology and saying to them peremptorily, 'Believe or be damned,' have the coarsest conception of the Saviour of the world."—J. R. SEELEY : *Ecce Homo*.

"All silencing of discussion is an assumption of infallibility."—JOHN STUART MILL : *Liberty*.

"Unless a universal divine spirit be recognized as living *in* man, there will be no chance of recognizing any as living *above* man; no revelation would be credible from a divine king that did not reveal also the long-brooding thoughts of a divine humanity."

—R. H. HUTTON : *Theological Essays*.

Concerning Heresy

THOUGH Hudibras had such analytical skill that

“ He could distinguish and divide
A hair ‘twixt south and southwest side,”

it is doubtful whether he could have settled the question, “ What is a heretic ? ” in such a way as to satisfy every one. If we fall back upon the aid of etymology, it seems clear that all who indulge in thinking are obliged, to a greater or less extent, to be heretics ; for heresy means a “ taking ” or “ choosing,” the selection of a part out of the whole. Where that which is presented before the mind is of such circumscribed proportions that it is readily comprehensible, men may be broadly ranged under the two classes of believers or unbelievers.

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But when, as in the case of Divine revelation, for instance, vistas of truth are opened up through which the light is yet dim, the only way in which it seems possible to avoid a measure of unconscious heresy is to stop thinking altogether.

The heretic, therefore, however offensive he may be to some people, has his *Apologia*. That easy-going indolence which hands over the solution of difficulties to others is a virtual denial of the significance of individuality. Like a vessel that keeps her sails furled in the harbour, and refuses the challenge of the tide, it avoids, no doubt, the risk of tempest on the high seas, but it will bring no treasure to those who wait upon the farther shore. In matters of wide-reaching import, the wise man, instead of idling till every particle of proof is beyond debate, will use the degree of knowledge he has already, and strive to confirm belief by putting it to the test of experience.

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It might be interesting, and sometimes painful, to inquire how many think more of the modes of expressing their opinions about truth than they do of the truth itself. A good deal of so-called religious doubt is simply the refusal to accept certain forms of statement which do not command the assent of the intelligence ; and the nervous fear excited among some because of this hostility loses sight of the fact that it is one thing to be opposed to truth, and quite another thing to dissent from some one else's "doxy" concerning it. Of course, even though the dissenter is sincere, he may still be in error. His metaphysical powers may be immature, and his judgment defective. Or, since creed and conduct interact upon each other, evil habits may distort the vision, and incline him to the denial of what runs counter to the trend of his life. But it would be most unfair to begin by assuming that he is either stupid or bad. That is a matter for separate investigation.

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For no one, surely, will suppose that the earnest thought which constructs a creed is of God, and the equally earnest thought which criticises it is necessarily of the devil. Over and over again the heretics have saved the Church from ruin.

We cannot be rid of the obligation to look into things for ourselves. Strong natures rather incline towards nonconformity. The interrogative mood, when put to the best uses, becomes a man. Tertullian asked, "What has Athens to do with Jerusalem, the Academy with the Church?" And the answer is, "Much in many ways." Every great problem of life claims the right of personal study, and cannot without hazard be denied it. To say that faith transcends knowledge is not to say that it contradicts or outrages knowledge. Though all kinds of thinkers have felt the necessity for some court of appeal, and have thus acknowledged that truth is not spun from the entrails of our own

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consciousness, yet revelation of any sort is possible only to those who are competent, to some extent at least, to apprehend it. Truth becomes ours when we begin to perceive with growing clearness its majestic proportions; and this insight constitutes the real measure of what we are accustomed to call originality. In this subjective sense, religion is as progressive as the most aspiring science could desire, and in precisely the same way, except that its truths are not the ally of the intellect alone, but the transforming power of our whole being. As we try to live them, we come more and more to know them. "Christian faith," says Hawthorne in his "Marble Faun," "is a grand cathedral with divinely-painted windows. Standing without, you see no glory, nor can you imagine any; standing within, every ray of light reveals a harmony of unspeakable splendours."

In some quarters nowadays, it is not fashionable to come to definite conclusions

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about anything. The modern church-goer would scarcely appreciate the kind of sermon that so delighted the Scotsman returning from abroad :—

“ O what a gale was on my speerit
To hear the p’nts o’ doctrine clearerit,
And a’ the horrors o’ damnation
Set furth wi’ faithfu’ ministration !
Nae shauchlin’ testimony here—
We were a’ damned, and that was clear.
I owned wi’ gratitude an’ wonder,
He was a pleasure to sit under.”

Even when dogmatism is not deemed an offense elsewhere, there is a wide-spread idea that it should never be heard in regard to the most stupendous subjects that can possibly engage human attention. What Matthew Arnold calls *Aberglaube* has ceased to invade and reinvoke, and in its place the outlook is obscured by ugly interrogation marks that bristle with defiance. This attitude of mind is in part, at least, a protest not against the existence

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of dogma but against its abuse, and is so far a good sign. We are coming to see that speculative error is not in itself a crime, and therefore cannot fairly be visited with punishment. Even when erroneous thinking seems to spring out of wicked living, it is in the character rather than in the creed that the guilt lies. The honest doubter deserves sympathy instead of reprobation. Belief comes hard to some. Though the haunting conviction of a Supreme Being may be said to pursue mankind everywhere, yet the God who alone is fitted to command worship seems at times withdrawn by His very greatness from earth's affairs, sitting apart in untroubled calm. There are dark hours when the sensitive spirit cries, like Richter in his awful dream, "O Father! O Father! Where is Thine infinite bosom that I might rest in it?" Agnosticism could never keep any hold upon human thought if a measure of truth were not hidden behind its

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hideous fallacy. For while the Divine records are indeed engraved in many scriptures, the words do not always seem easy to decipher. Whatever may be learned from nature or from the annals of the world, the final solution of the theistic problem lies in the human heart when illuminated by the epiphany of Jesus Christ.

Whether written down or not, we cannot help but have a creed of some kind. Escaping from the city of religious dogma, we soon discover that in the open country of "free thought," the same shadow still follows us. Offensive as know-everythingism is, know-nothingism is ruinous. Vague theories, no matter how beautiful in outline, are apt to trail off into most feeble practice unless there is behind them the motive power of steadfast conviction. Creed is simply the crystallizing of definite thought, and can disappear only with universal nescience. The world's most pro-

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ductive periods have always been positive ones ; and though preliminary criticism may seem at times iconoclastic, it prepares the way for building up something better on the site of the shattered idol.

As long as men continue to reflect at all, they will differ to some extent at least, in the perspective of their beliefs, and in the mode of stating them. No one need regret this ; for the full-orbed glory of truth is not made clear until it is viewed from many points of observation. Even if we feel sure that a man is wrong in his creed, the spirit of tolerance teaches us that his error is to be overcome, not by a process of browbeating, but only when he himself sees that it is error. How pitiable to exhaust indignation over speculative mistakes when it ought to be kept for base and selfish conduct !

For the Christian is not found out by show of hands on doctrinal matters. The real test of the quality of manhood is in

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the life, and creed is of value only in so far as it inspires to pure and serviceable action. Little Alice, though bewildered by conflicting evidence, could appreciate practical results. "I know what you are thinking about," said Tweedledum, "but it isn't so, nohow." "Contrariwise," said Tweedledee, "if it was so, it might be; and if it were so, it would be; but if it isn't, it ain't. That's logic." "I was thinking," Alice said very politely, "which is the best way out of this wood: it's getting dark. Would you tell me, please?" The great purpose of all our argument should be to lead us out of the shadow-haunted wood into some clear place where we may see freely and live nobly and courageously.

There is a growing feeling among thoughtful minds that, apart altogether from the question whether certain dogmas are credible or not, no mere formularies of any kind can be regarded as the highest

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or final expression of Christianity. From the standpoint of accepted beliefs, the definition of the heretic has shifted constantly, and the ecclesiastical outlaw of his own day often reappears as the adored hero of later ages. But the time is at hand when, if we still continue to hunt for heretics, we shall come up with them, not among the men who are perplexed in faith, but impure in deeds. To each expectant generation there must needs be given fresh glimpses into truth; but the essentially Christian temper remains the same down to the end of the world, evermore translating itself into beneficence. If the Church thinks to find sufficient shelter behind the shield of mere authority, whether real or imagined, she will yet be cast out and trodden under foot of men. She must learn more and more to put the emphasis where Christ put it, and to meet the assaults of her enemies, not by a bristling phalanx of propositions, but by the actual

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service she renders to the welfare of mankind.

Some creed there must be in order to rational conduct. But a very short creed will do if it is a vital one. Love to God and love to our brother also is a sufficient theology when it expresses itself in action. It is quite true that the points of divergence, even in an elaborated creed, among the sincere followers of Jesus, are far less important than the points on which they are at one. But the great hope of a dismembered Christendom drawing nearer together must emerge, not along the lines of intellectual agreement, but on the deeper basis of spiritual affinity. The Church is something more than an institution for the maintenance and defense of a certain set of opinions. It is a brotherhood drawn from many quarters, enriched by a variety of training and temperament, but united in a common enthusiasm to strengthen the weak, to cheer the discon-

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solate, to guide the erring, to lift up the fallen, to spread the Good News of Christ all over a sin-cursed world. The bigness of such a purpose will sweep away all littlenesses, and convince us that, while the door of entrance into the Christian fold cannot be made wider than Christ made it, it is high time to ask by what right any one dares to make it narrower.

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“Social progress means the checking of the cosmic process at every step and the substitution for it of another which may be called the ethical process; the end of which is not the survival of those who happen to be the fittest, in respect of the whole of the conditions which obtain, but of those who are ethically the best.”

—T. H. HUXLEY : *Evolution and Ethics.*

“The activity of man, directed solely to the attainment of individual happiness, is a complete renunciation of the life of man.”—TOLSTOI : *Life.*

“He that is selfish and cuts off his own soul from the universal soul of all rational beings, is a kind of voluntary outlaw.”—MARCUS AURELIUS : *Meditations.*

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IF every one did nothing else than mind his own business, there would soon be no business to mind. We are so bound up with our fellows, and so mutually dependent in many ways that human affairs cannot be viewed from the personal standpoint alone. And apart from the compulsion of circumstances, it has always been felt by the noblest spirits that some regard for the welfare of others is necessary to the wholesome unfolding of one's self. Writers like Mr. Benjamin Kidd in his *Social Evolution*, are mistaken when they assume that an ultra-rational principle must be introduced before men will recognize the validity of the altruistic idea, much less seek its triumph. The "reason" which makes selfishness possible makes

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unselfishness possible too when reason is fully awake to every factor in the situation. So far from altruism being a sort of fine insanity, there is a glorified common sense about the ethical commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

The real problem, then, seems to be how to adjust the relative claims of self and others, and at the same time to overthrow the fallacy that an irreconcilable conflict exists between them. Dante's keen insight peopled one of the most gloomy regions of the "Inferno" with

" The wretched souls of those who lived
Without or praise or blame, with that ill band
Of angels mixed, who nor rebellious proved
Nor yet were true to God, but for themselves
Were only."

But selfishness is very different from that type of self-love which aims to fulfil the best in us. Though the proverb has been vulgarized and given a bad name, it is profoundly true that charity begins at

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home. No one is to be blamed for trying to make the most of his gifts, and paying some attention to his health and comfort. Even though the motive be bad, the thing itself is not bad. Herbert Spencer rightly says in his *Data of Ethics* that "the individual who is inadequately egotistic loses more or less of his ability to be altruistic;" and egoism is inadequate when it fails to acknowledge the obligation which moral endowments impose upon us. Until we think enough of ourselves to shun what is mean and vile, the stream of sympathetic feeling will be shallow, whatever direction it takes. So far from interfering with service to others, a proper esteem for our own worth is required to raise that service to its highest possibility. The field of individual life must be cleared of noxious growths, or else the seeds of some of them are sure to blow over into the estates adjoining it. Self-sacrifice is not a euphemism for annihilation. It involves the throwing

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away of the false self, but equally the keeping of the true self in its full vitality, so that we seek for another the same objects as our own illuminated soul has learned to covet most.

Life cannot be divided into two distinct hemispheres. Personal culture and care for others run in parallel lines to secure its harmonious development. An apostle describes Jesus as one "who went about doing good." A simple statement indeed, but like white light, there is a blending of many colours in the picture presented before us. If an itinerary of this kind is to mean much, it demands a rare combination of qualities: breadth of intelligence, clearness of judgment, a tactful hand, a warm but also a well-educated heart. Not the deed alone, but the man behind the deed counts. The amelioration of the world is delayed, not so much because there are hard natures in it, as because some, disposed to do what they can, have

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not yet grown strong enough to make their cordial frame of mind tell with any great effectiveness. In the long run, character and nothing else determines the range and duration of influence. The most attractive personality after awhile loses its hold on others unless it has a store of productive force lodged in the dynamo of the soul. We may give more than we have, but we can never give more than we are.

Hence the added responsibility which the gregarious instinct carries with it. If one proposes to mingle with his kind and to be of any help to them, there must be something good in him, and that something must be brought out in an earnest, straightforward and loving way. At times, of course, self-revelation does not seem quite appropriate. In the haze of certain atmospheres only a fragment of the man is visible. When a number of persons come together without regard to communion of

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tastes or ideas, it is difficult to avoid some measure of concealment. But why need social life ever degenerate into a studied subterfuge? Why may not honest speech mate with honest silence? Nature always puts a premium on reality, and is impatient of the affected tone and the ghastly smile that mean nothing. We have fallen into an inconsiderate use of the word "eccentric"; for those who do things just because others do them are surely more out of the centre of existence, more "eccentric" in short, than the one who has the courage to be himself. No doubt, unless the world is mad, custom has something to urge in its defense, and whether or not there is any merit in outraging it depends on circumstances. But, at least, the right should be freely conceded to estimate the general vogue for what it is worth, and to be a dissenter if conscience or self-respect bids us. There is no surer sign of provincialism than to want to force every one

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into the same precise grooves of thought and deed, or to look with half-pitiful disdain upon those who venture to challenge the omnipotence of conventionality. In order to maintain the cosmos, each part must first be true to its own orbit ; and the orbits are different, though it must not be forgotten that at many points they impinge on one another.

Something is wrong with human intercourse when it tends to fetter individuality and reduce to much the same level the wise man and the fool. It is true indeed that occasions vary for showing the wide difference between them. One would not care to make a final estimate of personal values amid the confused Babel of tongues in a crowded drawing-room. Perhaps a genial disposition, helped by a strong sense of humour, may tolerate simpering puerilities for a little while, and even find amusement in them. We must not always take either ourselves or others too seriously. But if

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there seems no place for sincere thought and lofty purpose in what is called "society," some, at least, will feel obliged, because they possess genuinely social enthusiasms, to keep them fresh elsewhere, in contact with Nature, with books, with kindred spirits, and most of all, with the many-headed throng, unversed in rules of etiquette, but full of joys and sorrows, hopes and fears that stir the depths of every generous heart.

Women are most exposed to the bondage of fashion ; and however strong their desire to work out life's problems in a sensible way, it often seems as though there was a conspiracy to prevent them. Perhaps it is reserved for some modern Theseus to deliver the modern Ariadne from the social Minotaur ; but even if such a champion fail to appear, signs are not wanting that Ariadne will struggle hard to free herself. It must not be hastily inferred that even those who look most frivolous have

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no deeper side to their nature. Many bright young girls enter a timid protest against the policy of aimless drifting, and a new joy comes to them, though their first "mission" lies only among the common duties of the common day. Many matrons who, if they wished, might take a prominent place in the rivalries of ostentation, decline to engage in the contest because they have something better to do. As the world's wealth grows, we shall be compelled to settle aright the question of relative values, to make a cleavage between the barbarisms of mere material parade and the refinements of the cultured soul, or else give up our hope of progress; and any reform in social habits that encourages us to be more real, more earnest, more useful, will be welcomed by every one who has not wholly lost the vision of the magnificent tasks earth sets before us.

When one considers the possible bigness
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of life, it seems pathetic that so little should often be made of it. Think of this many-citied globe, this busy hive of varied industry, where the hand grows hard with labour, and the brain aches over its perplexing problems; this world so full of unnumbered wants and splendid opportunities, where Science comes with its suggestive lesson, where Art erects its monuments of imperishable beauty, where Music interprets the soul's unspoken passion, where not a few are crying for release from the blindness of ignorance, the burden of sorrow, the tyranny of sin. A world like this summons us to be up and doing with all our might, and the selfish spirit is clearly out of place in it.

Perhaps there is room for some one to write an essay on the disadvantages of civilization. But we shall not mend matters by the vain attempt which Rousseau advocated to return to a more primitive

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state. Our task is rather to illustrate the true meaning of simplicity amid the complex life which, whether we welcome it or not, is forced upon us, and is by no means incompatible with happiness if we have learned in what the idea of happiness should consist. Plato said that the right education is intended to teach us to rejoice and grieve over such things as are the proper objects of these emotions. Activity for self alone, instead of producing the sense of rich, full life, withers vital powers in a dreadful loneliness, and at the same time creates a thirst like that of Tantalus which is never satisfied. The best way to take care of "I" and to feel its true opulence is to embark it fearlessly on the world-current. When, caught up into the swirl of Nature's giant elemental forces, we become a tiny atom at the heart of the storm, though self is lost, the highest and most intense individuality is found. Poor Cupples in *Alec Forbes* thus sings his prayer

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for a release from the torture of a narrow self-consciousness :—

“ O lassie, ayont the hill !
 Come ower the tap o’ the hill
Or roun’ the neuk o’ the hill,
 For I want ye sair the night.
 I’m needing ye sair the night,
For I’m tired and sick o’ mysel’ ;
 A body’s sel’s the sairest weicht !
O lassie, come ower the hill.”

Silas Marner’s solicitude for little Effie makes a man of him. This is always how life grows. Going out of the petty *Ego*, we shall come back to find it dowered with a new strength and irradiated with a new loveliness. It is impossible to separate personal interests from the wider concerns of home, friendship, commerce, politics, religion, of everything, in a word, that pertains to mankind. When introduced to others so that they stir some true, deep feeling in us, we are really introduced to our greater selves ; while at the same time,

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catching gleams of light from the fringe of the Divine and Eternal, we begin to understand, as never before, the mysterious charm of that godlike Passion which, because it shrank not from self-sacrifice even unto death, has won its immortality.

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"For every piece of wise work done, so much life is granted; for every piece of foolish work, nothing; for every piece of wicked work, so much death is allotted."

—RUSKIN: *Munera Pulveris.*

"The great originality of Christ's teaching, and the feature that has chiefly given it power in the world, lay in the distinctness with which He conceived a state of society from which every vestige of strife and the modes of behaviour adapted to ages of strife, shall be utterly and forever swept away."

—JOHN FISKE: *The Destiny of Man.*

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WE shall never have our proper place in the world until we find out the utmost that is in us, and earnestly strive to bring it into fitting exercise. When it is said of some one that he is very clever, and would do wonderful things if he only applied himself, does not that little "if" throw doubt upon the assertion? For the capacity to apply oneself is an integral part of cleverness, and the clearest proof of really possessing it. In *Æsop's* fable the tortoise beat the hare; but it is not to be inferred from this that plodding belongs to dull and stupid people, and that flashes of spasmodic energy must be the mark of superior genius. Wide differences of gifts exist among men, but there are equally wide

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differences in the use made of what they have. And while finely organized natures may be subject to moods, and for long periods together may fail to do their best work, no one ever achieved any worthy ambition who did not learn to conquer lethargic tendencies and bring steady perseverance to bear upon it. The noblest powers are dissipated by lack of purpose, and the most moderate talent can accomplish something if it really tries. Outside of fairy-tales, Aladdin-palaces will not spring up in a single night.

It is part of the task of true civilization to remove unnecessary obstacles out of the way of honest labour, and to appreciate with discriminating intelligence the value of its various forms of productiveness. But economic laws, however just and good, do not compass the whole matter. Work is to be conceived of as the Divinely-appointed means of human development, possessing its own stupendous

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significance apart from anything that comes out of it in the way of wages. If God sat at a distance from the world, bathed in the careless ease of the Lucretian deities ; or if His footsteps could be traced only in some quiet haven removed from the clamour of the street, then it might seem that work was justified by nothing else than practical exigency. But when He comes to be known as the chief Actor in human affairs, not destroying our freedom, but making possible the movement of His own energy through it, flooding all things with His presence, and still writing His Scriptures every day for those who have eyes to read them, a new meaning is given to the earth-drama, and in the revelation of the sacredness of work, abundant reason found for doing it with our might. Noble service thus becomes a kind of prayer, glad obedience to duty an unconscious voice of thanksgiving, and the humblest kind of toil an educating

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force that broadens the whole horizon of life.

Even though it were possible for a little while by artificial means to bring the circumstances of all men to a common level, the disparity between men themselves would soon disturb the arrangement. To say this, however, does not imply that industrial conditions stand in no need of being improved. It is not the task of Christian ethics to usher in a machine-like Paradise where people do right because they can scarcely do otherwise ; but rather, in the midst of more sordid alternatives, to diffuse a spirit of truth and justice everywhere by first implanting the love of them in human hearts. No scheme of reform can be called scientific which deals only with effects and ignores causes. The raising of the moral tone will inevitably lead to better regulations ; but if the chief emphasis is placed on externals, and little or no attention paid to the incalculable in-

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fluence of character, the golden age will always remain a mocking dream. In order that Socialism may justify its name, and put an end to the unsocialism against which it is a reaction, it must accept the teaching of Jesus Christ, and grasp His idea of life. There is no fundamental unfairness involved in the fact that one man has more brains or gold or practical aptitude than another; but what we ought to wish to secure is that the reciprocal duties of each shall be well understood and executed in a spirit of brotherly love.

It is unfortunate, perhaps, that the current phraseology is so impersonal. Behind Capital is the capitalist, and behind Labour is the labourer. In short, we have first to deal with human beings, not with material conditions, and the root of the whole trouble lies in breaking loose from these vital relationships. So far from Capital and Labour being naturally at daggers drawn, they are partners in an enterprise

that necessitates the hearty coöperation of both ; and any strife between them is an economic blunder not less than a moral fault. If men were mere money-making contrivances, it might do to regard labour in the light of merchandise to be purchased as cheaply as possible. But because they are so much more than this, unless mutual good-will exists between employers and employed, not only is the highest measure of productivity out of the question, but a door is opened to inrushing evils which, if once allowed to have full play, would soon reduce the social fabric to a heap of ruin.

Combinations of various sorts are characteristic of our time ; and whether they will produce mischief or not depends on the motives that inspire them. The massing of capital in honest and capable hands ought to be of general advantage. It tends to lessen the cost of production, and therefore justifies sale at lower prices than when an indefinite number of small concerns is

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each maintaining a separate equipment. Because it does not always work that way, "monopolies" have incurred a good deal of well-deserved hatred. But, in such cases, the fact of combination is not the criminal thing ; the real guilt lies in the tyrannous greed behind it.

And if Capital combines, Labour may be expected to combine also. A single workman finds it difficult to obtain a hearing, especially if the supply of labour is fully up to the demand ; but when a large body of workmen come together in support of a common cause, their suit almost compels some measure of serious attention. Here, again, the fault is not in combining, but in the unreasonable demands occasionally made, in the failure to take proper account of the vast difference between the wage-earning rights of good and bad workmen, and, in certain instances, in an attitude of bitter hostility towards those who do not see fit to join the union.

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Nor should it ever be assumed that the concerted action of Capital is necessarily antagonistic to that of Labour, or *vice versa*. When this seems to be so, something is wrong on one side, perhaps on both. Of course, if each is saying, "How much can I get, and how little can I give?" friction is inevitable. But such friction is self-imposed, and does not belong to the nature of the case. The legitimate interests of any one part of the body corporate must have many points of sympathetic contact with those of all other parts. "Eventually it will be seen," says a thoughtful writer, Mr. Stanley Jevons, "that industrial divisions should be perpendicular, not horizontal. The workman's interests should be bound up with those of his employer, and should be pitted in fair competition against those of other workmen and employers. The best workmen should seek out the best master, and the best master the best workmen. Zeal

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to produce the best and the cheapest and the most abundant goods will then take the place of zeal in obstructive organization."

If those who desire to do honest work believe that they are being vexed with needless handicaps, they have an undeniable right to protest against them. But when sloth or incompetency or vicious indulgences diminish productive power; when work is regarded as an irksome performance of which the sole compensating incident is the periodic receipt of wages, then there must be trouble, and all the Labour Unions in the world will not prevent it. We have to listen sometimes to the maudlin wrath of inebriation, the incendiary speech of the professional agitator, the peevish wail of those whose energies are absorbed in grumbling instead of trying to do some useful thing. And the only attention such voices deserve is that which seeks by the best available means to

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silence their foolish outcry ; for though capitalists were all suddenly turned into angels, they would continue to be heard as long as the material was found for creating them. It has been the law of the past, and amid every change of economic relations it will be the law of the future that, in the long run, manhood, Sampson-like, wins its own enfranchisement, and yet, unlike Sampson, is not obliged to gain that triumph by an act of wholesale destruction which includes itself.

On the other hand, if the employer, never having learned the dignity of service, does not know how to treat the service of others ; if his interest begins and ends with the recurrent dividends ; if he views the workman simply as a kind of Mint, and neither knows nor cares much about his comfort and happiness ; if he maintains the “ sweat-shops ” where women and children are huddled together in unwholesome rooms toiling for a bare sub-

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sistence ; if he is bound to get rich at all hazards, no matter who suffers or who goes to the wall, what else can be expected than a smouldering hatred against him that sometimes bursts into destroying flame ? When any one is proved incompetent or unwilling to conduct his business in an equitable way, and does not seem disposed by ordinary arguments to change his methods, the State may have to step in and make it clear not only that workmen have rights, but that the public have some rights also, and that the overmastering greed of gain cannot be allowed to menace the general welfare.

And though there are still wars and rumours of wars in the industrial world, earnest minds discern more and more the cruel anomaly of it all, and strive with better hope to usher in the dawn of peace. Utopian as the laws from that hillside of Galilee may seem at first, they are being proved by experience the best for us. And

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the reason is that though we dwell in the midst of material affairs, and have a duty in developing them and healthily enjoying them, we are capable of a Divine alliance, and destined for an immortal life. There is no *Æschylæan* gloom, no shuddering horror, no remorseful tears ; and on the other hand, no ecstatic rapture, no inner calm, no glowing aspiration in the drama of an animal existence. It is the soul that tortures or delights us most ; and we have missed the chief benefit of work when it does not bring out the strength and beauty of the spiritual, and bind us more closely to our fellows and to God. If it were impossible to attend to earth's concerns without some measure of self-degradation, we might well wish that Christian ideals had been postponed till we reached a realm in which there was some chance to fulfil them. But the foundations of heaven must be laid in time, or the superstructure will never be completed in eternity. We can-

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not have the muck-rake first and the celestial crown afterwards when there are no more straws to pick up and gather together. Unless some truth and purity and unselfishness are shown in our present methods of living, an illimitable future would be an embarrassment, if not a positive curse. Work should be love in exercise, and how much yet remains for it to do!

A Christmas Dream

"And I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven."—*Revelation 21:2.*

A Christmas Dream

ONE night I dreamed a dream, and in my dream I was carried away to a large and beautiful city. Gazing about with the curious eyes of a stranger, I noticed that the street in which I found myself, as well as others leading off from it, was broad and excellently paved, and that at frequent intervals were open spaces filled with trees and flowers and fountains of pure water, in the midst of which many people walked, or sat down to rest and think awhile. For though all seemed to have something to do, there was not the noise and hurry of other great centres of population, nor yet that care-worn look on a single face which my previous travels in the world had made

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too sadly familiar. Those who passed by the place where I was standing gave me such a kind glance that I felt I had fallen among friends ; and at last, a venerable man, advanced in years, but still alert and vigorous, came up and asked if I was seeking any one. I told him that I had never been in the city before, and did not quite know how I happened to be there at all, but that its appearance interested me very much, and made me want to see more of it.

" Let me be your guide, then," said he, in a voice of great sweetness. And forthwith he led me out of the main thoroughfare until we stood in front of a massive building of chaste and harmonious design.

" What is this ? " I asked.

" This," he answered, " is called the Gallery of Public Instruction, and in it are collected the best paintings and statues and a large number of books for the benefit of the whole community. Our wealth-

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ier citizens, instead of locking up their art treasures and their rare folios at home, place many of them here under proper supervision, so that every one who has a delight in these things but lacks the means to obtain them, may have a chance of sharing his neighbour's good fortune."

"Have you, then, done away with private property?"

"Oh, no," said my guide, "we all have private property, and each one is given perfect freedom to consult his own special tastes with regard to personal surroundings. But it would be considered a disgrace to heap up possessions for mere selfish uses without any thought for the general welfare."

"In that case you cannot have any very rich men amongst you."

"It depends what you mean by the word 'rich.' Surely a man's greatest asset is a pure and loving heart; and if that be so, we must call any one rich, not be-

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cause of what he saves, but what he spends for the good of the others. There was a spot in the old cemetery for those who never seemed able to turn their money to right purposes. It was known as ‘the pauper millionaires’ corner,’ but no burial has taken place in it for many years.”

“But,” said I, “does not this system of yours produce much arrogance among the working-classes since, without any effort of their own, the means of culture are open to them?”

“No one is permitted to continue in the enjoyment of privileges he does not appreciate; and as we are all workmen of some sort, whether with our hands or our brains, there is no room for envy among the citizens, the more so because each is concerned with doing his tasks well rather than with the wage they bring, and each has equal opportunities for self-improvement.”

“Money-making, then, is not with you the main business of life?”

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My guide did not answer in words, but his smile was eloquent.

"All this is passing strange," I said ; "but what do you do with criminals and paupers ?"

"We don't have them," was the decisive reply. "Prevention is better than cure. Our laws will not allow one part of the community to oppress another part ; and since every one is thus able to earn an honest livelihood, what temptation is there to earn it otherwise ? If any of our citizens fall sick, they are cared for, when circumstances demand it, out of a common fund to which we think it a pleasure to contribute without publicity. The building at the end of the street," he continued, "used to be a jail ; but it is now in a dilapidated condition, as you see, and is kept standing only as a kind of object-lesson."

"Do you never have financial panics ? In my own home a good many people wear an anxious expression when stocks

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are going down and they can't find the money to hold them."

"But why can't they hold them?" said he with a puzzled air. "If the stocks are theirs, how can any one else take them against their will?"

"O but they are not really theirs," I replied. "Only a little is bought 'on margin,' we call it, and the capitalists send prices up or down as they like, except now and then when the market runs away from everybody."

Something like disdain appeared on my guide's benignant countenance as he answered :

"Of course, if that is how you do things, you must expect to suffer for your folly. But our Stock Exchange, as the name implies, is an exchange, not a gambling-place; and though we have our ebb and flow of material prosperity, it is part of the order of nature, like the tides, and brings no trouble with it."

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I began to repent of my burst of confidence, and thinking it time to change the subject, I asked :

“What about your civic government?”

“That is chosen,” he answered, “by popular vote, the franchise being given to every adult citizen of both sexes, except such as are proved incapable of using it with intelligence; and only those of unquestioned integrity present themselves for public office. The candidates, therefore, do not need to hunt for votes nor to make any extraordinary preëlection promises. It is assumed that they have no other aim than the common good, and while election is deemed a great honour, defeat brings no disgrace in this healthy rivalry of public-spirited citizens.”

While this conversation proceeded, we had been walking leisurely through several streets, and had met a number of people. I was much impressed with their happy and gracious appearance. The joy of serv-

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ice seemed to shine forth from their bright eyes, and gave a charm to their whole bearing.

"Is there any drinking among your citizens?" I asked abruptly.

"Drinking, of course," he answered, "but no drunkenness. The popular voice has long since declared against the manufacture and sale of fiery liquors in various stages of adulteration, and the pure wine of our country could harm no one unless he were a most detestable glutton."

My guide spoke with some warmth, and I could not but admire him for it.

"But," said I, "have you no difficulty in enforcing the law?"

"There is no need to enforce what has been created by general sentiment before it took a formal shape. Even if the law were blotted out of the statute-book, things would remain unchanged."

Just then we were passing a large and attractive shop. I asked my conductor if

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we might go inside ; and for answer he pushed open a door and we saw many persons buying and selling. Those who bought gave without question the sum demanded, and those who sold seemed more anxious to furnish what was wanted than to make a big profit for themselves ; so that, on both sides, there was an entire absence of distrust or avarice, and only the quiet delight of mutual ministration.

It was on the tip of my tongue to say that this was like a kind of universal Civil Service. But the scene had made me too thoughtful for joking, and we passed out silently into the street again. After awhile I asked :

“ How do you avoid bankruptcies in your city when merchants are so careless of their own gains, and so eager to meet the requirements of others ? ”

“ Easily enough ; for no buyer will take anything unless he is able to pay at once the proper price for it.”

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"This is wonderful," I exclaimed.

"Do you think so?" he answered smilingly. "To us it would be wonderful if it were otherwise."

As he said this, we turned into another street, and on the corner stood a beautiful and stately building which I took to be a church.

"What denomination does that church belong to?" I asked, pointing towards it.

My companion did not seem to hear me; and thinking that age must have made him a little deaf, though I had not noticed the infirmity before, I repeated the question in a louder tone.

"I don't quite understand you," he said.

"Why," I answered, rather glad of the opportunity to give a little instruction of my own after receiving so much, "you surely know that churches are called by various names according to their doctrine and modes of worship? I am a Presbyterian myself, and in my own town they take the

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lead in a good many things. They have the best preachers and the most influential congregations, and from what I learn of the intelligence and moral worth of your citizens, I should think they must stand well amongst you."

He looked rather bored at first by this self-complacent harangue of mine. But gradually an amused expression overspread his face, and it was with a kind of quiet chuckle, as I fancied, that he finally said :

"There are no Presbyterians here."

"What!" I gasped, almost out of breath with wrathful surprise, "no Presbyterians in this enlightened community?"

"None," he replied again.

I could not leave the subject in this shape ; so when I had recovered myself a little I asked :

"What about the Methodists? They are an aggressive people."

"There are no Methodists."

"Well, then, the Episcopalians, High

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Church and Low Church, how do they get along?"

"There are no Episcopalians."

"Are you all Roman Catholics?" I ventured to ask once more, though with a growing sense of futility.

"There are no Roman Catholics," was the grave reply.

By this time the bewilderment was on my side, and it became my turn to say, with some heat :

"I don't understand you."

My guide turned kindly towards me, not seeming to notice much my ruffled temper, and said :

"I am an old man now, but your questions remind me that when I was a lad, people used to talk a great deal about these different kinds of churches, and if I remember rightly they did not always love one another. But the very names have so long since become obsolete that I had forgotten them. Each church now has the

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simple title, ‘The Church of Jesus Christ,’ and the members of it are content to be called ‘Christians.’”

“But do you mean to tell me,” I said, still struggling to get hold of something familiar, “that every one worships in precisely the same way?”

“No,” he answered, “but they all worship one common Lord, and it would be thought absurd to create divisions on the mere ground of some difference in ritual.”

“But have you no creeds?”

“We have one creed,” he replied with solemnity, “and no one can be a church-member who does not try to practise it. And the creed is this: ‘I believe in the love of God, and in its power to inspire and purify human life; and I promise to love God with all my heart, and my neighbour as myself.’”

“It must be difficult to maintain your churches when you seem to think so little of form and doctrine.”

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“On the contrary, they are maintained in a most efficient way by the free-will offerings of the people; and as there is no motive for erecting a church unless it is needed, they are all well filled with rich and poor alike, and their main work is to teach not only the citizens, but strangers from other lands, to cultivate truth and love, like their great Founder.”

“You have no trouble, then, I suppose, in regard to the religious training of your children?”

“Why should there be any trouble when we hold that the first duty of our youth is to learn the will of God and do it? Education begins with this greatest lesson, and the whole of life is ours to illustrate its meaning.”

As we thus discoursed in this strange fashion, my mind full of all that I had heard, we began to approach the centre of the city, where was a great open square in

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which many people were gathering on all sides.

"What means this concourse?" I asked.

"Wait," said my guide, "and you shall see."

Gradually an immense multitude had come together, and as they stood there with expectant faces, of a sudden, though from what quarter I could not be sure, there arose a great volume of harmony which was caught up by every one in the throng, till the air shook with the mighty anthem, "*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men.*" I had never heard any music like that before, and no words can describe the effect it produced upon me. I thought of the bitter cry, so sadly different, the cry of the distressed and afflicted all over the world; and an irresistible longing seized me to be enrolled among the citizens of this wondrous city, and to bring sorrowful hearts everywhere within its gates of joy. I turned with

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eager haste to ask my guide whether these things might be. But he had vanished, and the last lingering tones of the sweet anthem died away.

With that, trembling, I awoke, and behold, it was a dream.



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